

IN THE CLAIMS

1. to 13. (withdrawn)

14. (Currently Amended) A method of ~~creating a connecting link between~~ joining displayed source and destination visual objects with a connector, each visual object having a peripheral boundary, said method comprising:

determining a region ~~within~~ interior of the peripheral boundary of each visual object to be joined and a connecting path extending between the determined regions;

clipping each end of the connecting path so that the ends of the connecting path ~~terminates at the~~ terminate at locations where the connecting path intersects the peripheral boundary of the source and destination visual objects; and

displaying a connector extending ~~a connecting link~~ along the clipped connecting path between the source and destination visual objects ~~terminating~~ that terminates at said locations.

15. (Original) The method of claim 14 wherein said region is a point within each visual object.

16. (Original) The method of claim 15 wherein said point is the center of each visual object.

17. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 16 wherein said connecting path is a straight line and wherein during said clipping, said straight line is traversed to determine the locations where said connecting path intersects the peripheral boundaries of said source and destination visual objects.

18. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 16 wherein said connecting path is a curved line and wherein during said clipping, said curved line is flattened and represented by a series of straight line segments, each straight line segment being traversed to determine the locations where said connecting path intersects the peripheral boundaries of said source and destination visual objects.

19. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 16 wherein said connecting path is a self-loop and wherein during said clipping, said self-loop is traversed in clockwise and anti-clockwise directions to determine the locations where said connecting path intersects the peripheral boundaries of said source and destination visual objects.

20. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~[[17]]~~ 14 further comprising placing an arrowhead on at least one end of said ~~connecting link~~ connector, said arrowhead having a tip terminating at said location, said ~~connecting link~~ connector terminating at a backend of said arrowhead.

21. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 20 further comprising placing an arrowhead at each end of said ~~connecting link~~ connector.

22. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 20 wherein said connecting path is a straight line and wherein during said clipping, said straight line is traversed to determine the locations where said connecting path intersects the peripheral boundaries of said source and destination visual objects.

23. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 20 wherein said connecting path is a curved line and wherein during said clipping, said curved line is flattened and represented by a series of straight line segments, each straight line segment being traversed to determine the locations where said connecting path intersects the peripheral boundaries of said source and destination visual objects.

24. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 20 wherein said connecting path is a self-loop and wherein during said clipping, said self-loop is traversed in clockwise and anti-clockwise directions to determine the locations where said connecting path intersects the peripheral boundaries of said source and destination visual objects.

25. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~[[17]]~~ 14 wherein said ~~connecting link~~ connector is represented by a plurality of spaced shapes.

26. (Original) The method of claim 25 wherein said shapes are generally evenly spaced along the length of said connecting path.

27. (Original) The method of claim 26 wherein the shapes along said connecting path are the same.

28. (Original) The method of claim 26 wherein the shapes along said connecting path are different.

29. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 25 wherein said shapes provide semantic meaning to the ~~connecting link joining said visual objects~~ connector.

30. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 29 wherein said connecting path is a straight line and wherein during said clipping, said straight line is traversed to determine the locations where said connecting path intersects the peripheral boundaries of said source and destination visual objects.

31. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 29 wherein said connecting path is a curved line and wherein during said clipping, said curved line is flattened and represented by a series of straight line segments, each straight line segment being traversed to determine the locations where said connecting path intersects the peripheral boundaries of said source and destination visual objects.

32. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 29 wherein said connecting path is a self-loop and wherein during said clipping, said self-loop is traversed in clockwise and anti-clockwise directions to determine the locations where said connecting path intersects the peripheral boundaries of said source and destination visual objects.

33. to 47. (withdrawn)

48. (Currently Amended) An object-connecting tool for ~~creating a connecting link between~~ joining displayed source and destination visual objects with a connector, each visual object having a peripheral boundary, said tool comprising:

means for determining a region ~~within~~ interior of the peripheral boundary of each visual object to be joined and a connecting path extending between the determined regions;

means for clipping each end of the connecting path so that the ends of the connecting path ~~terminates at the~~ terminate at locations where the connecting path intersects the peripheral boundary of the source and destination visual objects; and

means for ~~extending a connecting link~~ displaying a connector extending along the clipped connecting path between the source and destination visual objects ~~terminating that terminates~~ terminates at said locations.

49. (Original) An object-connecting tool according to claim 48 wherein said region is a point within each visual object.

50. (Original) An object-connecting tool according to claim 49 wherein said point is the center of each visual object.

51. (Currently Amended) An object-connecting tool according to claim 50 wherein said connecting path is a straight line and wherein said clipping means traverses said straight line to determine the locations where said connecting path intersects the peripheral boundaries of said source and destination visual objects.

52. (Currently Amended) An object-connecting tool according to claim 50 wherein said connecting path is a curved line and wherein said clipping means flattens said curved line into a series of straight line segments, each straight line segment being traversed to determine the locations where said connecting path intersects the peripheral boundaries of said source and destination visual objects.

53. (Currently Amended) An object-connecting tool according to claim 50 wherein said connecting path is a self-loop and wherein said clipping means traverses said self-loop in clockwise and anti-clockwise directions to determine the locations where said connecting path intersects the peripheral boundaries of said source and destination visual objects.

54. (Currently Amended) An object-connecting tool according to claim ~~[[50]]~~ 48 wherein said ~~connecting link~~ connector is represented by a plurality of spaced shapes.

55. (Currently Amended) ~~The method of~~ An object-connecting tool according to claim 54 wherein said shapes are generally evenly spaced along the length of said connecting path.

56. to 60. (withdrawn)

61. (Currently Amended) A computer readable medium including a computer program tool for ~~creating a connecting link between~~ joining displayed source and destination visual objects with a connector, each visual object having a peripheral boundary, said computer program comprising:

computer program code for determining a region ~~within~~ interior of the peripheral boundary of each visual object to be joined and a connecting path extending between the determined regions;

computer program code for clipping each end of the connecting path so that the ends of the connecting path ~~terminates at the~~ terminate at locations where the connecting path intersects the peripheral boundary of the source and destination visual objects; and

computer program code for ~~extending a connecting link~~ displaying a connector extending along the clipped connecting path between the source and destination visual objects ~~terminating that terminates~~ at said locations.

62. (withdrawn)

Please add the following new claims:

63. (New) An object-connecting tool according to claim 54 wherein the shapes along said connecting path are the same.

64. (New) An object-connecting tool according to claim 54 wherein the shapes along said connecting path are different.

65. (New) An object-connecting tool according to claim 54 wherein said shapes provide semantic meaning to the connector.